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ABSTRACT

Substantial disagreement exists among professionals in the judiciary and in the public at large as to what the goals of the justice system should be. Some programs and interventions aimed at preventing juvenile violence and delinquency, as well as efforts that rehabilitate young people already in the system, are identified here. The report provides a broad-based look at the literature available in the field and identifies those elements that have been found to produce success in returning youth to a productive path in an interdependent community. The programs are explored in four chapters: (1) Does Anything Work?; (2) Causes and Origins; (3) Things that Don't Work; and (4) Efforts that Work. A final chapter, entitled "And Miles to Go Before We Sleep," outlines some of the changes that need to be made. Each chapter raises important questions that must be addressed if a system that supports the healthy development of youth, especially those fragile, vulnerable, or damaged youth, is to be created. It is hoped that this information will serve as a reference for youth workers and policy makers alike in choosing where to invest public resources on behalf of troubled children. (RJM)

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juvenile justice in montana: facing what works and what doesn't

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The photographs that grace the chapters of the report are the work of photographer Chris Minnick. These tender photos tug at our hearts and remind us why our work is so important.

The artwork featured on the front cover of this publication was created by Phillip B. Lynam, whose artistic talents IYI has used since his freshman year of high school. Phillip is currently enrolled at the Art Institute of Cleveland, Ohio.

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Juvenile Justice in Indiana:
Facing What Works and What Doesn't

1996

Doreen L. Smith
Director, Advocacy Programs

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Indiana Youth Institute
Indianapolis, Indiana

About the Indiana Youth Institute

We believe that the state of Indiana can and should become a state that genuinely cares about its young people and that its national reputation should reflect that concern and commitment.

To enhance that commitment, the Indiana Youth Institute works with adults who care about youth.

- IYI advocates for better service for Indiana's young people, both directly and in collaboration with others.
- IYI develops strategies to increase youth-serving professionals' knowledge, caring and competence.
- IYI cultivates and supports innovative projects that hold promise for improving the lives of Indiana's young people.

We believe that the key to the success of young people is in the hands of the adults who care about them.

IYI is an intermediary agency that supports youth development professionals and decision makers with advocacy, research, and training.

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Juvenile Justice in Indiana:

Facing What Works and What Doesn't

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Oneness:
Great Principles Shared By All Religions

Conquer With Love

With kindness conquer rage, with goodness conquer malice;
with generosity defeat all meanness;
with the straight truth defeat lies and deceit.
Hinduism

Recompense evil, conquer it, with good.
Islam

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.
Christianity

A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.
Judaism

Conquer your foe by force, and you increase his anger. Conquer by love, and you will reap no after-sorrow.
Buddhism

Love is sure to be victorious even in battle, and firmly to maintain its ground. Heaven will save its possessor, by his love protecting him.
Taoism

From ONENESS by Jeffrey Moses
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Author's Preface

I set out to collect and clearly identify programs and interventions that work to prevent juvenile violence and delinquency as well as to rehabilitate those young people already in the system. I hoped that this information would serve as a reference for youthworkers and policymakers alike in choosing where to invest public resources on behalf of troubled children. However, such simplistic solutions are not readily found, for the issue of juvenile justice and accountability is a complex can of worms indeed. Not only are different interventions appropriate and successful for different youth, but the same program may have differing degrees of success, depending upon where and by whom it is being implemented. Determining success depends on identifying evaluation criteria. But here also, there is not agreement among those working in the field — for even these evaluation criteria change, depending on the elements of the program and the youth that participate in it. Further, few programs have been formally evaluated, as most sponsoring agencies funnel their resources into direct services.

Substantial disagreement also exists among the cacophony of voices in the field — and among the public — as to what the goals of the juvenile justice system should be and at what age or circumstances an individual becomes fully accountable for his or her actions. Is rehabilitation or retribution the proper course to take in remediating misbehavior? Disagreement was readily present among our own **Kids Count in Indiana** Steering Committee and the others who served as outside readers for this report. Some heralded it as a clearly written, important work identifying core concepts of programs that work and those that do not. Others indicted the piece as a bleeding heart treatise that was full of tear-jerky stories but little objective material. Still others felt that this report did nothing to address victims' rights or individual accountability for behavior and the consequences of that behavior. These differences of opinion mirror the public debate over youth crime and violence.

This report does not resolve these differences of opinion. It is not a systems description or a program description. Rather, it seeks to provide a broad-based look at the literature available in the field and to identify those elements that have been found to produce success in returning youth to a productive path in an interdependent community. It raises critical questions that must be addressed if we are to design or redesign a system that supports the healthy development of our youth, especially those fragile, vulnerable, or damaged youth living on the edge of places in which most of us would not be caught dead.

These differences of opinion underscore the need for a public dialogue about the outcomes we want to achieve in the juvenile justice system and how, as a community, we get there. A dialogue of this type will require us to be a little less polite and a little more honest about our opinions, values, mores, and expectations about public behavior and responsibilities, for both our children and ourselves. It will also result in the conflict, clash of ideas, and divergent thinking that must occur and be resolved if we are to reach consensus about how to address the challenge of juvenile violence and crime. This challenge is ours collectively to face. The question before us is whether we have the public will to do so.

chapter 1. does anything work?

The hearts of small children are delicate organs. A cruel beginning in the world can twist them into curious shapes. The heart of a hurt child...may fester and swell until it is a misery to carry within the body, easily chafed and hurt by the most ordinary things.

Carson McCullers, Author, cited in *Beyond Rhetoric: A New American Agenda For Children and Families.*

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"Youth Run Wild, Juvenile Crime Soars!"

And so the headlines scream at us from our daily newspapers. Fear runs high and drives our public-policy decision-making processes. But can something be done to stem the tide of youth violence? Does anything work? Is prevention possible? During the 1994 Congressional debate over the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, many of our leaders suggested not. Prevention programs included in the crime bill were readily labeled as an "unholy trinity of pork, posturing, and partisanship."[1] Calls were made for more police, more prisons, strict and mandatory sentences, and lowering the age at which a young person may face adult consequences for his or her actions. Unfortunately, these measures are driven more by fear and anger than fact. If we are going to be effective in addressing the problems youth face today, we must set aside our fear and face the facts about what works and what does not.

What is needed for our youth today is the same as was needed by them yesterday, namely, an environment that ensures that all children and youth — even those young people who have had cruel or otherwise rocky beginnings in life — are nurtured and supported well into adulthood. As noted in the summary report of the National Commission on Children:[2]

> *Some people view adolescents as self-sufficient young adults who no longer need adult support and guidance. Others view them as idle, aimless, and potentially threatening. Neither stereotype is accurate or fair. Both betray an unwillingness to invest time, attention, and resources in young people at a critical juncture in their lives. The result is to set many adolescents adrift in an adult world before they have the knowledge, skills, and maturity to cope with the challenges before them. Some will face futures of low productivity and lost potential. Others will be hurt or killed, through their own careless actions or those of others. These are personal tragedies and tremendous social losses.*

All youth have basic needs that must be met if they are to grow up healthy and prepared to engage productively in the lives of their communities. When young people can find no healthy opportunities to meet their needs, they will often seek out unhealthy avenues to address them. How many young offenders might have been diverted from their unlawful behavior if only they had had an appropriate outlet for their affiliation, exploration, and bonding needs? The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, in its concluding report, identifies thirteen developmental needs for healthy development of adolescents. These include seven basic developmental needs and six specifically related to competence in a technologically advanced democratic society. The seven basic developmental needs are to:[3]

- Find a valued place in a constructive group
- Feel a sense of worth as a person
- Achieve a reliable basis for making informed choices

- Know how to use the support systems available to them
- Express constructive curiosity and exploratory behavior
- Believe in a promising future with real opportunities
- Find ways of being useful to others

The following are six specific additional requirements adolescents must meet in order to achieve competence in many domains and be able to compete in our technologically advanced society:[4]

- Master social skills, including the ability to manage conflict peacefully
- Cultivate the inquiring and problem-solving habits of mind for lifelong learning
- Acquire the technical and analytical capabilities to participate in a world-class economy
- Become ethical persons
- Learn the requirements of responsibie citizenship
- Respect diversity in our pluralistic society

According to the Carnegie Council, the United States is abandoning 19 million of its young people at the most critical point in their passage from childhood to adulthood — during young adolescence. Although the Council study shows that young adolescents crave and require adult support and guidance to move them toward independence, it is during the ages of ten to fourteen years when these requirements are less likely to be met. Tragically, during this time of experimentation, when needs are least likely to be met, young adolescents are most receptive to intervention and support. The Council notes:[5]

> *Early adolescence — the phase during which young people are just beginning to engage in very risky behaviors, but before damaging patterns have become firmly established — offers an excellent opportunity for intervention to prevent later casualties and promote successful adult lives.*

If we are to move to a prevention-oriented model that promotes the healthy development and optimal functioning of our youth, it certainly makes sense to intervene with developmentally appropriate programming at the time when youth are most receptive and when experimentation with risky behaviors begins.

Many structural foundations in our society have changed, significantly altering the types of supports available to guide youth into adulthood. These changes include smaller and more mobile families, an increasing number of children being raised by single-parent households, and a huge increase in the number of parents (especially mothers

with young children) who have entered the workforce. These dramatic demographic changes beg the question of men and women, "Who is minding the children?" Add to this lack of supervision adolescents' ready access to guns, drugs, and alcohol; a steady diet of violence in music, movies, and the media; and diminished employment opportunities driven by economic changes, and you have a ready recipe for disaster.

This is especially true for those youth who have already come to the attention of social service agencies and who have entered the juvenile justice system, through their own behavior or the behavior of those around them. It forces us to examine seriously what outcomes we want and expect from our juvenile justice system and what it will take to get us there. It also requires us to examine our courage. Are we willing as a people to invest in programs that work, even if these programs use methods that we do not like, consider to be too lenient, or think should not work?

We must challenge our assumptions and counter the rhetoric if we are to devise a system that works (see Chapter IV). Consider the thoughts of three officials in different agencies in the juvenile justice system:

> ***Lynn Cole, chaplain for youth waived to the adult system, Marion County Jail:***[6] *Public officials must educate the public — and it is risky business because what the public wants and what the system needs (what works) are not congruent. The public wants its "pound of flesh" and perceives the juvenile justice system as just slapping the kids on the back of the wrist, or spanking them.*
>
> ***Marion Superior Court Judge Gary L. Miller:***[7] *Politics, rhetoric, and self-interest must be set aside if the broken criminal justice system is to be fixed.*
>
> ***David S. Liederman, executive director of the Child Welfare League of America:***[8] *Calls for the death penalty, stiffer sentences, the treatment of 14-year-olds as adults in criminal proceedings, and the use of the National Guard make for good politics, but lousy solutions.*

Does our current juvenile justice system contribute to the outcome of healthy and productive young people, ready to engage in the processes of their society? Most political and public commentary would suggest not. Criticism of the juvenile justice system is nothing new. What is most disheartening, however, is the length of time that deficiencies in the system have been noted, with little or no substantive change. Twenty-five years ago in 1970, John M. Martin of the Youth Development and Delinquency Prevention Administration, acknowledged the same criticisms of the juvenile justice system.[9]

> *At present, few in public life are satisfied with the capacity of the juvenile justice system to fulfill its statutory mandate; many also disagree about what the mandate should be. Few academicians and few informed officials find the system useful or beneficial to the youth involved in it. Today for example, in state after state, an informed*

consensus is rather vigorously maintaining that juvenile courts, and especially training schools, are a "mess." There is widespread conviction that the juvenile justice system is, in large part, an outright failure. It not only frequently fails to rehabilitate, but it also fails to live up to ordinary standards of human decency. Even agency personnel, as professional agents of the larger society, find the system of juvenile justice highly problematic. Many feel that the agencies in which they work are badly financed, poorly staffed, and lacking a relevant program model.

Even as far back as the 1800s major problems of the training/reform school model were noted. Homer Folks, President of the Children's Aid Society of Pennsylvania, cited the following criticisms of reform schools in 1891:[10]

- The temptation it offers to parents and guardians to throw off their most sacred responsibilities.
- The contaminating influence of association.
- The enduring stigma . . . of having been committed.
- The rendering impossible the study and treatment of each child as an individual.
- The great dissimilarity between life in an institution and life outside.

Over one hundred years later, the same criticisms remain valid. Yet as a society we collectively seem unwilling to change our course or rethink our strategies for treating delinquent and wayward youth. There are several reasons why we need to change paths and move from talk to action. These include:

Cost *— Our current correctional system is expensive, with costs growing by leaps and bounds, driving the need for increased taxes.*

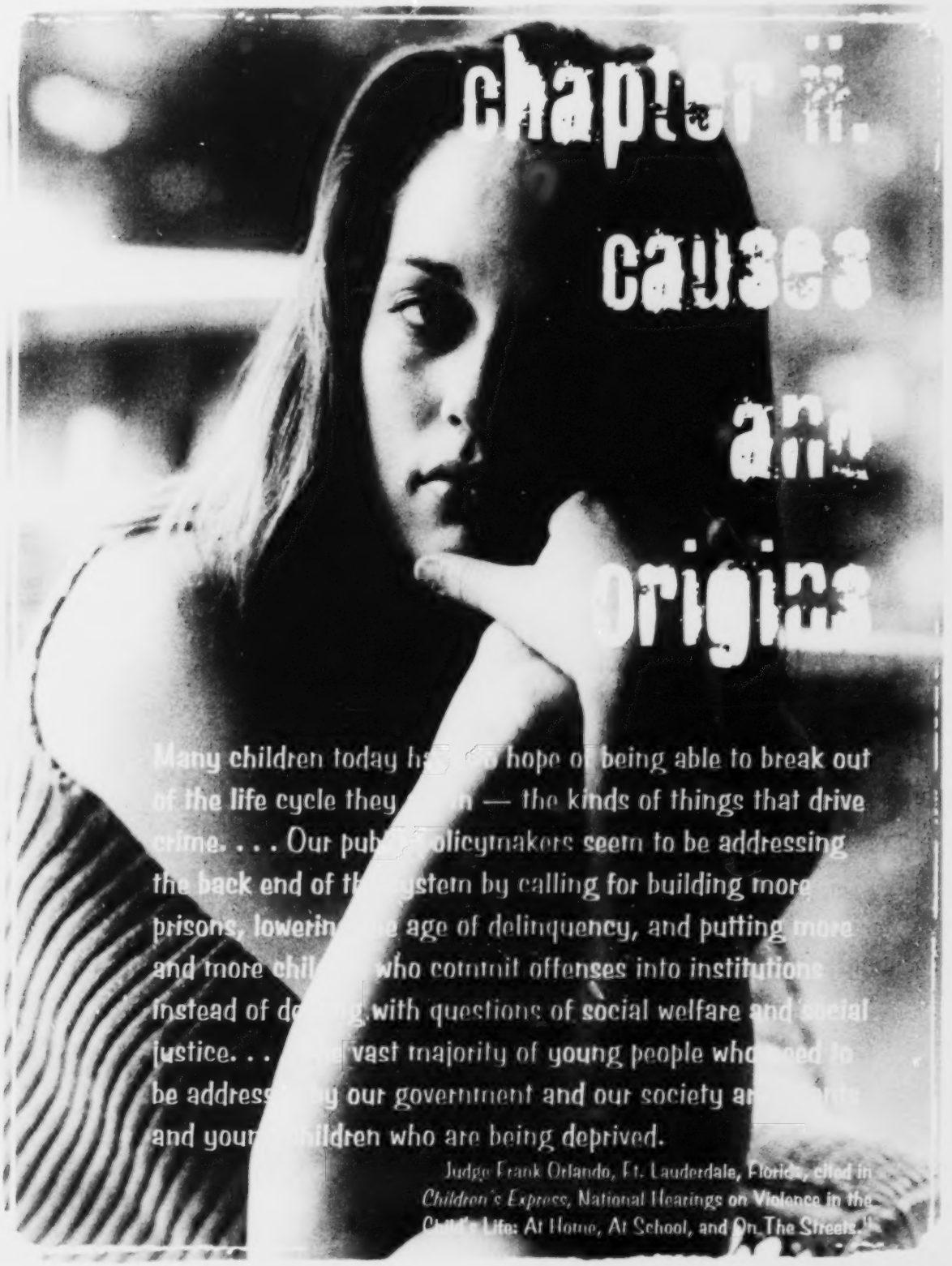
Effectiveness *— We have nearly doubled the population that is incarcerated. Juvenile crime is not going down, and our youth are not faring any better.*

Fear and loss of freedom *— People increasingly live in fear, and this fear limits their lifestyles, including where they go by themselves, their shopping habits, preoccupation about the safety of their children, and how and where they live.*

Fewer available youth *— As a result of declining birth rates, the relative proportion of youth to the elderly population is shrinking, decreasing the number available to support retirement systems, the costs of government and the economy in general. With fewer young people available, a larger proportion will be needed in productive roles to support the societal infrastructure.*

> ***Approaching crime wave of the boomlets now ages 5 through 15*** *— Although the total proportion of youth in the population is declining, the proportion of youth aged 5 through 15 within that population is growing. The offspring of the baby boom generation are now approaching their teenage years. If juvenile crime rates remain the same, the nation will see a future crime wave based on the increased proportion of population within this age group.*

In seeking answers to the question of "What Works?" we reviewed reports from many national organizations and experts on youth crime and violence. The groups included the National Crime Prevention Council, The National Commission on Children, the Office of the U.S. Attorney General, Children's Express national public hearings on violence, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Judges in Indiana and elsewhere, University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work, the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, the National Coalition of State Juvenile Justice Advisory Groups, the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, the American Youth Policy Forum, and the National Institute of Justice. We have reported many of their beliefs and opinions in their own words to underscore their points. The strength and consistency of their messages is overwhelming. There is no shortage of information on what causes delinquency and violence and what works to prevent it. In this report we attempt to paint a comprehensive picture of the factors that propel youth into delinquent behavior, identify aspects of programs that work, and discuss programs that do not work well despite their popularity.



Many children today ha[illegible] hope of being able to break out of the life cycle they [illegible] — the kinds of things that drive crime. . . . Our pub[illegible] olicymakers seem to be addressing the back end of th[illegible] stem by calling for building more prisons, lowerin[illegible] age of delinquency, and putting more and more chil[illegible] who commit offenses into institutions instead of de[illegible] with questions of social welfare and social justice. . . [illegible] vast majority of young people who need to be address[illegible] our government and our society ar[illegible] and your[illegible] ildren who are being deprived.

Judge Frank Orlando, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, cited in *Children's Express*, National Hearings on Violence in the Child's Life: At Home, At School, and On The Streets.

Much of America still doesn't get it

There is a clear relationship between child maltreatment and subsequent adolescent offending. Child abuse breaks the trust between the child and someone close to the child. A poor or otherwise inadequate response by the child welfare system to this abuse compounds matters. The dangerous combination of ready access to guns and ammunition, lack of supervision, and constant media glorification of violence adds fuel to the flames of anger and rage instilled by dysfunctional families, decaying neighborhoods, and social disorganization. The lack of positive early childhood opportunities, experiences, and mastery of the earlier developmental stages often results in teens who are impulsive, immature, and easily influenced.

If we are going to address the needs of delinquent youth, we have to be brutally honest about what causes the problems. We need to understand that violence, childhood maltreatment, delinquency, disintegrating neighborhoods and juvenile crime are interconnected. The National Council on Crime and Delinquency notes, "The relationships between poverty, crime, and incarceration are undeniable."[12]

Exposure to violence

Exposure to violence and subsequent involvement in the cycle of violence is a widely recognized phenomenon. This connection is most fully realized in the case of juvenile homicide. Charles Patrick Ewing, clinical and forensic psychologist, attorney and author, has thoroughly studied the subject of juvenile homicide and summarized his findings in *Kids Who Kill*. After this extensive research, Dr. Ewing notes:[13]

> *The single most consistent finding regarding juvenile homicide, however, is that kids who kill, especially those who kill family members, generally have witnessed or have been directly victimized by domestic violence. The most common form of domestic violence witnessed by juveniles who kill is spouse abuse (one parent assaulting the other), but being directly victimized by child abuse is even more common [than witnessing it].*

Judge Frank Orlando, when asked about the relationship to youth violence echoes this sentiment:[14]

> *Everything that we know about young people growing up is that they live what they learn. We are experiencing violent behavior by younger and younger children because they are more and more exposed to violence in their own lives. If they live in a violent environment, if they live in a system of deprivation, in a situation that is crime-ridden, those are the things that they'll learn and those are the things that they will do. Children are not born as criminals.*

Senator Paul Simon in testimony before the Children's Express reporters at their hearings on violence in October 1993 also concurs with this conclusion:[15]

> *We simply have to recognize that we imitate what's on television. If television for 30 seconds glorifies a bar of soap, we go out and buy a bar of soap. And if, for 25 minutes television glorifies violence, unfortunately, we go out and imitate the violence.*

Interesting enough, it has been reported that even some of the rap artists who promote and peddle violent and otherwise lurid lyrics refuse to allow their own children to listen to their music. According to an *Indianapolis Star* article, most rappers lead double lives, presenting a public image portrayed in lyrics, videos, stage performances, and media behavior that portrays them as "bragging, slovenly, drug-dealing, nihilistic thugs and criminals." Yet at home they promote family values, including discipline, respect for adults, expectations of good grades in school, and prohibition of rap music in the house or allowing only "clean rap" with "no profanity, misogynistic rantings, or anger."[16]

Childhood maltreatment and its relationship to subsequent offending

Another factor in juvenile delinquency and violence that has been exhaustively documented is the relationship of childhood maltreatment and later delinquent offending. This relationship was discussed at length in IYI's earlier report, *Juvenile Justice in Indiana: Facing The Issues*:[17]

> *Multiple interacting factors contribute to youthful ruin. A clear link exists between maltreatment as a child (child enters welfare system) and later delinquent behavior (child enters juvenile justice system). A study conducted by the National Institute of Justice in 1992 showed that being abused or neglected as a child increases the likelihood of arrest as a juvenile by 53%, likelihood as an adult by 38%, and likelihood for a violent crime by 38%.[18] In two separate studies the Indiana Department of Correction clearly documented abuse, neglect, drug and alcohol problems, poor supervision by parent or guardian, single parent homes, school problems, behavior problems, and mental health problems (including suicidal tendencies and psychiatric hospitalization) as common among the youth incarcerated in their facilities. Furthermore, the pattern was set early: More than 60 percent of the boys and 55 percent of the girls had first arrests before the age of 13 years.[19]*

The National Coalition of State Juvenile Justice Advisory Groups expands on this theme:[20]

> *The evidence is fairly compelling of a link between childhood victimization and delinquent behavior, especially violent offending, despite the methodological problems with some of the studies that describe the linkage (Widom, 1989b). Despite research difficulties, there does appear to be a greater risk for violent offending when a child is abused or neglected early in life, and such a child is more likely to begin violent offending earlier and to be more involved in such offending (Widom, 1990).*

The National Council on Crime and Delinquency also notes this relationship:[21]

> *Abusive families, hopelessness, frustration, poverty, and day-to-day representations of violence in the media all contribute to levels of violence in our society. There needs to be a greater focus on the harmful effects of the availability of both firearms and drugs as well as the quality of care and nurturance provided to young children.*

Until our elected officials, the media, and the general public truly understand and accept the relationship between maltreatment and subsequent offending — and invest in those programs and services that work to prevent it — the incidence of juvenile offending will likely proceed unchecked.

The special case of kids who kill

Dr. Charles Patrick Ewing, examines case after case of juvenile homicide, each of which is extensively and exhaustively documented in his book. His profound work identifies four consistent elements in these tragedies:[22]

> *Homicide, like most behavior, is learned. It is a function of both person and circumstance. . . . Juvenile homicide is no exception. Juvenile killers are not born but made. . . . Whatever else may go into the making of a kid who kills, virtually all juvenile killers have been significantly influenced in their homicidal behavior by one or more of just a handful of known factors: Child abuse, poverty, substance abuse, and access to guns. . . . The good news is that we know what these factors are and could do something to reduce their prevalence. The bad news is that we are doing very little. [See Box A, p. 15.]*

What might have made a difference?

An old Native American adage holds that before you pass judgment on an individual's behavior, you should walk a mile in his shoes. Another way to gain insight is to ask the individuals themselves why they behaved as they did or what might have made a difference in that behavior in the first place. Four different sources of youth responses to these questions are highlighted below.

U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno frequently speaks to young offenders about crimes they committed and makes the following observations based on her conversations with them:[24]

> *When I ask children who have been in trouble what could have prevented their getting into trouble, they tell me two things again and again. First, if there was something for them to do in the afternoons and evenings when nobody was paying attention to them, it would have made a tremendous difference. Second, and almost more important, they desperately wanted somebody they could talk to. Somebody who didn't put them down, who didn't hassle them, who listened to them and understood. Somebody who treated them firmly, but fairly.*

BOX A

Dr. Charles Patrick Ewing
Four Key Elements in Juvenile Homicide[23]

Child abuse

The single most consistent finding in juvenile homicide research is that juveniles who kill have generally witnessed or have been directly victimized by family violence. The correlation between child abuse and juvenile homicide makes sense. Some children who are abused or witness abuse of loved ones learn to be violent; their abusive parents are powerful, negative role models. Other abused children suffer psychological or physical trauma that leads to the kinds of neurological or psychological problems often associated with juvenile homicidal behavior. Still other abused children kill in direct response to the abuse they suffer — they kill their abusers (page 158).

Poverty

The link between poverty and crime, including violent crime, is almost universally recognized. It is impossible to say what percentage of juvenile homicides are committed by youngsters living in poverty, but it is undoubtedly high, especially for gang homicides, killings committed in the course of robberies, and drug related killings. Economically impoverished youngsters are more likely to become involved in juvenile gangs, commit economically motivated crimes such as robbery, and be exposed to the temptations of the drug trade often flourishing in their disadvantaged and decaying urban neighborhoods (page 161).

Substance abuse

There are no definitive data on the number or percentage of homicides committed by youths under the influence of drugs, but the most recent research suggests that as many as two thirds of all juvenile killings are committed by youngsters high on drugs. Drugs play a variety of roles in juvenile homicides. Some drugs, such as crack, appear to stimulate violent or irrational behavior. Others seem to create confusion, lower inhibitions, impair judgment, or make youngsters more susceptible to peer influence. But whatever role drugs play in facilitating or encouraging juvenile homicide, drug abuse is clearly a factor that often increases the likelihood that a juvenile will kill. . . . (page 163).

Drug abuse affects the number and rate of juvenile homicides not only by altering the psychological functioning of juveniles in ways that make them more likely to kill, but also in at least two other less direct ways: Drugs create an environment in which some juveniles have economic incentives to kill; and drug abuse by parents contributes to the likelihood that they will abuse or neglect their children (pages 163-164).

Many juvenile killings are drug-related not because the perpetrators are under the influence of drugs when they kill, but because these homicides are committed to make or protect drug profits (i.e., turf and enforcement killings) (page 164).

Finally, drug abuse will likely have its least direct but most insidious, long-lasting, and potentially most powerful effect on juvenile homicide by contributing to the incidence of child abuse and neglect. Parental drug abuse is clearly one of the major causal factors in child abuse — and child abuse victimization is clearly a major causal factor in juvenile homicide (page 164).

Access to guns

Most homicides, including killings committed by juveniles, involve the use of firearms. Juvenile killers use a variety of firearms in a variety of ways. In some cases, a youngster finds a parent's rifle, shotgun, or handgun and uses it to kill a playmate. In others, an abused child shoots and kills an abusive parent, often with the parent's own gun. In many cases, a juvenile robber panics and uses a cheap handgun to kill the robbery victim. Other juvenile killers — like the teenage gang member who shoots into a crowd in a "drive-by" or the juvenile drug dealer who assassinates a competitor in a turf war — do their killing with high-powered automatic and semi-automatic pistols and assault rifles. What all these juvenile homicides have in common is the young perpetrators' access to guns. What most have in common is that they would not have occurred but for the juvenile perpetrator's access to a firearm (page 165-166).

Some of the juvenile gun possession in public schools is clearly attributable to the drug trade, especially the sale of crack, but one recent study found that many juveniles bring guns to school for their own protection. Youths aged nine to seventeen told researchers that they "believe carrying weapons is the only way they can protect themselves" from others with guns (page 167).

Another sympton of the increasing access juveniles have to guns is the growing number of accidental shootings of children by other children and the government's response to these accidents. Gun accidents are now the fourth leading cause of death among children under the age of fifteen, and roughly half the children who die in these accidents are killed by guns belonging to their own parents (page 168).

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The National Commission on Children, when conducting their nationwide research, also interviewed young inmates. The Commission noted in their final report (pages 220 - 221):

> *In a discussion with teenage prison inmates in Bennettsville, South Carolina, the National Commission on Children heard poignant stories of how high-risk behaviors that began as youthful experimentation and striving for peer acceptance often resulted in violence and even death. These young men are serving time for crimes that range from drug offenses to homicide; their sentences vary from one year to life. Yet their backgrounds are remarkably similar. Virtually all grew up in low-income, single-parent families without male authority figures or any close role models in their families or communities. Most began to do poorly in school at an early age and eventually dropped out. Their peers encouraged them to try alcohol and drugs, and they began to commit crimes — stealing, mugging, selling drugs — that eventually landed them in prison. Although they were all teenagers, some already had children of their own. What might have changed the course of their lives? Most said they wished they had had higher aspirations and more opportunities, more support from their absent fathers, and more encouragement, guidance, and discipline from the adults in their lives.*

Indiana youth write about gangs

In a recent Youth Forum of *The Indianapolis Star*, high-school, middle, and junior-high students were asked to comment on the prevalence of gangs in their neighborhoods or schools. They were also asked why young people join them, and what can be done to lessen their influence. The responding commentary of the youth was nothing short of powerful and prophetic. Selected highlights include:[25]

Little choice

> *Most kids want to join gangs to become part of a family. Either these future members do not have a wholesome family life or do not consider themselves part of a family so they look for a new family. These potential members might not want to be in a gang, but they believe circumstances in their life give them little other choice.*
>
> *The horror for many parents is the fear of their kids getting hurt through gang-related activities. The fear also prevents many students from learning. How are students expected to pay attention in class if they are worried whether they'll get beaten today or are wearing the wrong colors?*
>
> *Society as a whole is responsible to educate children, but the responsibility of the parents is to show other alternatives to gangs. Let your kids know you love them and that they can tell you anything. If children are*

raised in a loving family, they will not feel the need to become part of a gang because they are already in a "gang" — their family.

Patrick Love, Avon High School, Avon

Seeking support

I am an ex-gang member who has a lot of knowledge about gangs. I joined a gang for support and a family I never had.

Gang members are not always doing criminal activities. They hang around together, play basketball and do extra-curricular activities. It's like a big family.

Don't get me wrong. They do stir up trouble a lot with rival gangs and innocent citizens. They're out to get respect and money to move up in rank, also to show they are loyal to what they belong to.

Most people ages 12 to 21 join gangs knowing they will find some kind of support. But actually that is a fake role. I know gang activity got me 20 years in prison. And I can truly say it is not worth doing time for gangs. When you get locked up, the gangs keep going with or without you. Eventually you lose all contact.

But it resumes on the inside. Prison is full of gangs, black and white. Some gangs refer to themselves as "organizations."

Most young people need to learn they can get some support from youth clubs, boys' clubs and families and not turn to street gangs. I'll close with this: Take it from an 18-year-old who will be behind bars until 2014. Gangs don't pay!

Steve Wilson, Indiana Youth Center, Plainfield, Arthur Campbell High School

One big family

I believe people join gangs today because they are somewhat like a social group. The negative aspects of a gang are more apparent then the positive ones, but believe it or not, there are some. Gangs do more than encourage drugs and guns.

I just recently moved to Indianapolis from South Bend. In my neighborhood there was a very prevalent gang (as well as many other smaller gangs). Practically everyone in that part of town was down with the same gang. It was like one big family. Everyone knew each other.

If anyone was caught up in something they couldn't handle, they always had backup. Whatever you needed, if somebody else had it, it was yours. You were never lonely.

It's true that some gangs do encourage violence and such but loyalty, devotion and love also go around inside a gang. For some, the gang is their family, friends, teachers and role models. There might not be anyone else in their lives to guide them.

Being caught up in a gang is sometimes an easier way of life. Everything comes easy by doing wrong. And when there are people all around you doing the same thing, you're in a group of power and it's the only way you can get it.

Little kids look up to you. When you have control like that, you're not going to worry about the fact that you're trying to take control of the wrong things.

Laura Joyner, Emerich Manual High School, Indianapolis

Seeking stability

One of the toughest questions dealing with today's youth is, "Why do kids join gangs?"

With the increasing divorce rate, kids are looking for some stability in their life when there is none at home. Kids find the stability and support they need through gangs.

Acceptance is also a need that all people have. When there is pressure from their peers, the media, and the music groups of today, kids are going to look upon gangs as a desirable alternative. Why wouldn't you join a gang?

When kids watch movies and listen to music and these images of gangs are portrayed as a life of money and power, they don't look at abuse or violence as a reason to stay out of gangs.

If kids could be given a place of acceptance and stability at home, then I feel that there wouldn't be such pressing problems of involvement in gangs.

Abi Rinearson, Manchester High School, North Manchester

Why Bluffton?

Gangs used to be a pretty big problem in my neighborhood. We had a small, quiet community in Bluffton until the gangs started to settle in. Many teens started joining them. Everyone started questioning, why Bluffton? Let me explain.

Everyone needs to love and be loved — babies, children, teens, adults, and the elderly. When teens feel they aren't loved or don't belong, they might let peer pressure sink in. If they don't have the correct friends,

they might turn to a gang. Gangs make some people feel they belong or have purpose.

Gangs aren't needed for a harmful purpose but for a useful purpose in society. Everyone belongs to a group, be it a church group, team, choir, or gang. Maybe gang members just haven't chosen the right group.

Ashley McCormick, Bluffton-Harrison Middle School, Bluffton

Known by name

Our town does not have gangs because we are a rural community. The kids are included on the farm and don't have time to be in a gang or on the streets.

They spend more time with their parents and their parents spend more time influencing them. The kids in town aren't anonymous because everyone knows their name.

Carrie Tharp, Union County Middle School, Liberty

Dead and wounded from the crossfire

The dictionary defines gang as a group of people who choose to carry out criminal activities and cause disorder and mayhem.

In the United States, gangs have been a part of everyday big city life. Now gangs are invading almost every part of the country. They are filled with mostly teenagers from broken homes, hard lives and weak family backgrounds. These kids are in need of someone who will care for them and "have their backs" as the expression goes, so they join gangs and feel "hard" and "cool."

There are several ways to become a gang member. Different gangs require different methods. To be "jumped in" is the most frequent method. This is where the person to be inducted has to fight three or more people, and if he gets two or more people on the ground, he's in. For males, getting "blessed in" means you know one of the main members and can just recite the "sacred" verse. Females get in if they have sex with a gang member or fight a girl.

I live on the Northside of town. My street is the origin of the Vice-Lords, one of the two most important gangs in Indianapolis. They really don't cause much disruption, but they deal drugs. That leads to misunderstandings, which cause fights and shootings.

My friend got shot this summer because he is a Vice-Lord and the guys who shot him were opponent gang members, the G's. Gang violence has affected me deeply because my friend died by getting caught in the

crossfire. There are places in this country where if you wear your hat the wrong way or wear the wrong colors, on the wrong side of town, you will be dead.

I feel that the only way we can reduce gang violence is by providing a more positive environment to the younger generation. Parenting rules definitely need to be more strict and parents need to know the kind of people their children associate with. They need to be aware of their kids using drugs or carrying weapons.

The only way we can stop this increasing violence is by turning in crucial information because most of the members who are in the leading positions are in their mid-20s and early 30s. They are using these young kids by introducing them to the "hard core" life, but nothing good ever results for these kids.

The safety and feeling of belonging that these gangs provide should come from their homes, unconditionally. Maybe next time, if love and care are provided at home, there would not be an innocent victim lying dead in a gang-related, senseless crossfire.

Bidisha Chatterjee, North Central High School, Indianapolis

Young reporters underscore causes of violence and action needed

In October 1993 a group of young reporters and editors (ages 8 to 18 years) from six *Children's Express* bureaus across the country held three days of national, public hearings on violence in the lives of children at home, at school and on the streets. They interviewed more than 50 policy-makers, residential-treatment facility staff, national experts, and youth and family members who had been directly affected by violence. The *Children's Express* reporters and editors summarized their findings and recommendations drawn from these remarkable hearings. These recommendations are noted in Box B, p. 22.

Based on the commentary provided by the young people, it is clear that what remains enigmatic to many adults in their communities is quite obvious to the youth.

Putting it all together — The interconnection that produces violence, dysfunction, delinquency and despair

Understanding the complex web that produces the hopelessness and despair of so many of our young people today requires a recognition of the whole picture. John Calhoun, Executive Director of the National Crime Prevention Council, Washington, D.C., provided a cogent summary of this picture, and our respective roles in it, during his testimony at the Children's Express hearings referred to earlier. His remarks are contained in Box C, p. 23.

Things we know for sure

By now it should be obvious what causes delinquency, violence, and juvenile crime. It should also be clear that we must get ahead of this major social challenge if we are ever to successfully address it. Unfortunately, the issue is complex, much like the mythological creature Medusa, a monster with many heads that all work to defeat prevention's best efforts. Therefore, we must begin with what we know based on what the data show. It is time we put the rhetoric aside and ask ourselves what are the facts about the patterns of delinquency and violence. The following facts are provided to help reframe our thinking:

- Violent crimes committed by juveniles peak at the close of the school day and decline throughout the evening hours.[27]
- More than one-fourth of male adolescents commit at least one violent offense before reaching adulthood.[28]
- More than 80 percent of those who commit a violent offense during adolescence terminate their violence by age 21, and the "criminal careers" of most violent youthful offenders span only one year.[29]
- Despite the prevalence of delinquent behavior, a small proportion of adolescents (6 percent) are responsible for two-thirds of all violent crimes committed by juveniles.[30]
- Indiana's annual arrest rate for violent juvenile crime varies between 429 - 483 per 100,000 youths (depending on methodology used to collect the data and calculate the rate). However, rarely do we focus on the number of youth that ARE NOT arrested each year for violent crimes (99,517 - 99,571 per 100,000 each year).[31]
- Many people, youths and adults alike, commit offenses and are never arrested or convicted. Of the 34 million crimes committed in 1990, 31 million went unreported or unsolved.[32]

In addition to facing the facts about what we know about youthful behavior and delinquency, we must also have the courage to face the facts about the programs and approaches that have traditionally been used to address this problem. Do they work? What is the optimal approach to preventing delinquency, promoting pro-social behavior, and supporting that transition from youth to adulthood? The following sections attempt to address these core questions by looking first at things that don't work and, then, at things that do.

Box B

Children's Express
Summary of Findings and Recommendations
National Hearings on Violence in the Child's Life:
At Home, At School, and On The Streets

The Nature of Violence in America Today

- Violence does not exist alone.
- We live in a pressure cooker environment which puts people under tremendous stress that leads to violence.
- Violence is not something people are born with — it's modeling others' behavior.
- TV violence is a factor, but not the primary cause of violence.
- No one wants violence to continue.

Approaches to the Treatment of Violence

- Violence needs to be treated like a deadly disease.
- We need to focus on prevention — rather than reacting after people are hurt — to create safe, nurturing environments for kids.
- We need to address the whole family and the many complex issues families face.
- Adults need to listen to kids; give them individual attention and positive messages.

Action Needed

- Handguns and assault weapons MUST GO!
- Government can't do it all — the private sector and communities must come together in a social movement.
- Children must speak up — to someone when they've been abused — and out to the world.
- It will take both children and adults working together to solve the violence problem.
- We need to make children a priority (again) and make a national commitment to that priority.

Box C

John Calhoun, executive director,
National Crime Prevention Council, Washington, DC[26]

It's not just the deaths that we need to be concerned about; it's the loss of outrage. Why the violence? There are several reasons. One is the collapse of families and anonymous neighborhoods. Trouble stems from disconnection from those normalizing institutions like schools, families, community and job. Disconnection not only breeds crime and violence, it also can breed a sense that we're not responsible for others.

More and more families are raising kids alone. This is wrong. Kids have less and less contact with adults. So the communicators of values more and more are the peer group and television.

High school dropouts and single teen parents are neither good role models nor good parents of kids. They tend to be poor and struggle more.

Children aren't safe. A teen in Oakland told me, "I can get a gun right down the block, but I have to take a bus to get school supplies."

Child abuse continues to rise. And violence done to children early, we know, is paid back later.

Almost all of our policies relating to youth are based on pathology. They're based on trouble. Why don't we go beyond that and say, "What are you good at? What do you like to do? You are a terrific kid and society needs you!" We very rarely look at youth as positive resources for the community.

We need to help kids, but we also have got to claim kids and say, "We need you; you're part of us." Teens ache to belong and to give. There exists a vast reservoir of idealism, but we tend not to tap it. We don't even look for it very often.

We have fled in terror from the combative field of values. We've ceded important words like responsibility and duty and obligation to the new right. I think because we have not asked more of kids, those with whom we work, we risk stripping them of their dignity, implying they're not capable. And often we earn their resentment.

There is income disparity. The rich grow richer, and the poor grow poorer, and this breeds tension and despair.

So what do we need? Let's look first to an unusual source for guidance: the gang recruiter. What does he provide? Family, community, status, recognition, an outlet for energy, money, adventure. He does not provide a safe environment, varied role models, a sensible outlet for energy, a wider world beyond neighborhood turf, a context in which to serve the neighborhood - positively, or hope for the future.

So what should we do? We have to strengthen the natural mechanisms that make a community work: families, schools, programs such as Healthy Start in Hawaii. We must hold parents responsible for their children's behavior as much as possible.

I'd require parenting education in school. Institute conflict resolution. Spread programs such as Beacon Schools, which open early and close late, providing places for kids to go. Communities with high rates of adult involvement with youth, who listen to youth, have less trouble.

Give youth the opportunity to serve. We have seen youth do extraordinary things for their communities.The results are stunning: increases in competence, confidence, self esteem. Work gets done, and kids usually make educational gains as well.

Our social policy, our vocabulary is impoverished. We've tended to make everyone a victim. Now there are a lot of victims out there. There's a lot of pain.

Very often we don't communicate to youth. We don't say, "We need you — you've got a skill that somebody needs." So let's add a new verb to our youth policy lexicon and start claiming kids in addition to helping them.

Let's also make kids safe. Pass the Brady Bill. Get rid of assault weapons. Forbid possession of handguns by minors.

And if the media, which is awash in violent programming, can't regulate its own behavior, then the public should and must.

And there's much, much more. Job training and re-training, reduction of youth involvement with drugs and alcohol, and so on.

But the most important single challenge before America in the '90s is to build a sense of community that transcends individualism to serve us. We need to transform the American perspective from *me* to *we*.

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don't
Children have more need of models than of critics.
Joseph Joubert, French Moralist, cited in
Beyond Rhetoric: A New American
Agenda For Children and Families.

Disconnect between public perception and what actually works

We must remember that juveniles, even those sent to the adult correctional system, will eventually get out. Whether examining programs that are effective or those that are not, we must first ask ourselves what we want the youth to be like when they leave. The National Council on Crime and Delinquency notes:[33]

> *. . . Delinquency is least likely to progress to adult criminality when one or both of two key life transitions are experienced by at-risk youth: (1) the forming of long-term relationships (i.e., marriage); and (2) gainful employment. Traditional justice system responses to juvenile crime do little to facilitate these transitions.[34] In fact, persistent reliance on incarceration appears to lower the odds that delinquent youth will form permanent bonds or find employment. If society's goal is to reduce youth crime and violence, we must invest in those interventions that will maximize positive transitions into adulthood, rather than limit our options through ineffective, though politically popular, responses.*

An angry public wants its pound of flesh, just desserts for the offender, retribution and accountability. In our anger and vigor to assure consequences, we need also to have wisdom about what ultimately works and what does not. The public's desire for control fuels the move to the larger institutions. Yet these institutions are a dismal failure at "reform." What works is short, intensive programming. Prevention, however, is better. As we ponder our options, we would do well to remember the words of the youth themselves, quoted above, as we examine what doesn't work.

Programs that don't work

If we are to effectively reduce the incidence of juvenile delinquency, violence, and crime, we have to be willing to face honestly that which does not work, no matter how popular it is or how much we think it should work. Four highly popular approaches that are not effective are described below, coupled with supporting evidence for why they do not work.

Incarceration

The criminal justice system, especially in its treatment of juveniles, has long depended on incarceration as a deterrent to criminal or delinquent activity. However, the effectiveness of this approach has limited success for several reasons:[35]

> 1) Would-be offenders would have to be rational in their decision making, rather than as they usually are — impulsive and often under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
>
> 2) Imprisonment would have to be seen as an unacceptable consequence of their behavior, rather than as it often is — an enhancer of social-status, reputation and respect, and even a safe haven from the streets.

3) Getting arrested or being convicted for committing a crime would have to be relatively certain, rather than what is usually true — an unlikely event. For example, Huizinga and Elliot found that only 24 percent of the youth who commit crimes for which they could be arrested actually are arrested.[36]

4) Imposition of prison terms for those who are caught would need to occur in the beginning or at the peak of their criminal activity, rather than when they usually occur — when their criminal careers are coming to a close.

As a result of mixing populations of youth or youth and adults, further challenges exist when using incarceration as a solution for youth crime and violence. As noted in *Facing the Issues*:

> *The Department of Correction faces serious challenges when considering where to place violent youthful offenders. If the youth remain within the juvenile justice system, the risk remains for mixing population groups where some juveniles might be victimized by other more violent and aggressive offenders. However, if the youth are waived to the adult system (or if they are age 16 or older and already face charges as an adult in the adult system) and are sentenced to one of the adult correctional facilities, the youth are placed in the untenable situation of trying to survive among an adult inmate population. This population is fully grown and developed, perhaps double in physical size and strength of the youth being incarcerated. This situation often results in horrific abuses for youths, many of whom turn to suicide in an attempt to escape the situation in which they find themselves.*
>
> *In testifying before the Juvenile Code and Youth Gang Study Commission, Lynn Cole, the chaplain for waived youth at the Marion County Jail, summarized this concern as follows: When [kids are] thrown into the adult system, if they show any sign of weakness, they become someone else's sex slave and then commit suicide or are killed. Young kids end up joining prison gangs, such as the Aryan Brotherhood or the Black Nationalists, and end up getting meaner and tougher in order to survive. We seem to forget that these kids will be out and see the streets again.*

The National Coalition of State Juvenile Justice Advisory Groups underscores the high vulnerability of youth in the adult system:

> *Juveniles in adult institutions are five times more likely to be sexually assaulted, twice as likely to be beaten by staff, and 50 percent more likely to be attacked with a weapon than youths in a juvenile facility (Forst et al., 1989; Eisikovits et al., 1983).*[37]

In addition to the increased victimization of youth incarcerated in the adult system, the effectiveness of incarcerating youth in general is in question. We have almost doubled the juvenile population incarcerated, yet have seen little or no resulting change in juvenile crime.

Large training schools

Institutionalization of youth in traditional training schools, designed over a century ago, such as the Indiana Boys' and Girls' Schools, is just a different form of incarceration. These facilities are separate from the adult facilities but similar in structure.

Krisberg and Austin note:

> *It is also significant that most states are not firmly committed to community-based treatment. Most jurisdictions still rely on placement in institutions, with conditions reminiscent of reform schools 100 years ago. Children continue to be warehoused in large correctional facilities, receiving little care or attention. Eventually they are returned to substandard social conditions to survive as best they can.*[38]

Creating large, new treatment facilities or training schools is not the most effective long-range approach to reducing violence. The National Council on Crime and Delinquency warns:[39]

> *Long-range reductions in youth violence depend on changing those factors that propel troubled youth toward violent behavior. Programs that deal only with offenders — that is, after the fact — will have little or no impact on levels of violence in America. . . . Existing research strongly supports the need for a comprehensive violence reduction strategy. This strategy should include prevention programs, intermediate sanctions, well-structured community-based programs, small, secure facilities for the most serious offenders, and sound re-entry and aftercare services.*

Institutionalization or incarceration of youthful offenders is often seen by the public and policy-makers as a necessary component of the juvenile justice system to protect the public. However, this belief is a misapprehension, for many of the youth who are incarcerated at these schools are not violent offenders. A random sample of the youth housed at the Indiana Boys' and Girls' Schools in July 1992 found 44 percent of the males and 31 percent of the females had been committed for offenses against property.[40]

There are other, more effective options. Richard Mendel of the American Youth Policy Forum notes:

> *Youth sentenced to intensive probation in lieu of incarceration have been found to have recidivism rates roughly equal to their peers who are incarcerated, and the crimes committed by probation youth who reoffend are typically less serious than those committed by formally*

> *incarcerated youth.[41] Yet the cost of intensive supervision ($26 per day) is less than one-third the $88.54 per day cost of a juvenile jail commitment.[42]*

The use of incarceration or institutionalization for troubled youth is not only very ineffective, but also very expensive. In Indiana, the current daily per diem cost (as of 11/95) for placement at the Girls' School is $98.75 and $88.34 for the Boys' School.[43] Per diem costs at other juvenile facilities range from $85.78 at the North Central facility in Logansport to $117.70 at the South Bend Juvenile Facility, with an average juvenile per diem rate of $93.41.[44] Sadly enough, if services had been available, these youth could just as readily have been treated and supervised in community-based arrangements, usually at much less cost and with equal or better success rates.

Indiana's overreliance on incarceration and other institutional care for troubled youth has resulted in a conundrum for the state, as noted by staff of the Legislative Service Agency (LSA):[45]

> *Indiana finds itself in a "Catch 22" situation, because it does not have the resources to develop and provide the less restrictive, community-based services, yet failing to develop and provide these services results in overuse of overly restrictive, costly placements. As a result, available resources are used too quickly. Services become more reactive, and only the most serious of cases are prioritized for action.*

Sometimes we have to have the courage to make an investment in order to realize later expenditure savings. The state of Indiana is currently facing the greatest budget surplus in its history. Is this the time for the state of Indiana to invest in approaches that result in reduced costs, more effective rehabilitation for our troubled youth, and increased public safety?

Boot camps

One of the most popular approaches devised in the last 20 years to rehabilitate nonviolent offenders has been the creation of boot camps, also referred to as "shock incarceration." The theory behind boot camps is that young, nonviolent, often first-time offenders can be "shocked" back into appropriate, pro-social behavior. The camp is modeled after military boot camps, which have proved helpful for young delinquent men in the past. Camp life is highly disciplined, with drilling, structured hours, mandatory alcohol and drug testing/rehabilitation, intensive physical training, school work, and labor; all are enforced by exacting drill instructors, who frequently yell at and intimidate their charges.

The thinking behind this approach is that young offenders would not only develop discipline but also find the experience so unpleasant that they would never want to return to another camp or prison experience. The boot camps have been highly popular among politicians and the public, with camps now operating in at least 30 states, 10 municipalities, and even by the federal government.[46] Indiana opened its first boot camp, Camp Summit in LaPorte, in the spring of 1995. But does this approach work?

It is too early to evaluate Indiana's specific experience with a boot camp. Research in other states indicates that boot camps don't work. Richard Mendel, of the American Youth Policy Forum notes: "Outcome research has consistently found that the recidivism rates of boot camp graduates are no better than those of convicts sent to traditional prisons."[47] Mendel cites the work of Doris MacKenzie and Claire Souryal of the University of Maryland to support this conclusion. MacKenzie and Souryal evaluated the boot camp experiences of eight states and found that "the impact of boot camp programs on offender recidivism is at best negligible."[48] They concluded their study with the comment, "If success is measured in terms of recidivism alone, there is little evidence that the in-prison phase of boot camp programs has been successful."[49] It is important to note that all research to date has been on adult boot camps, not juvenile. With the increase in juvenile boot camps, however, data specific to juvenile camps will no doubt be forthcoming.

The National League of Cities publishes an annual survey of municipal officials' opinions and priorities. The 1994 study showed that **assuring public safety** was among the three highest priorities noted by the 383 elected municipal officials who completed the survey.[50] When asked about which measures they felt would be most likely to improve public safety and reduce crime, **only 13.1 percent felt that boot camps proved an effective strategy**.

Not only is the effectiveness of boot camps in question, but some have suggested that the experience may actually do more harm than good by increasing the very behavior the camp is designed to eliminate. Morash and Rucker conducted a major study of the correctional boot camp experience and reported their findings in 1990. Upon testing with the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), they found that following a boot camp experience, military recruits showed an increase in aggressive, impulsive, and energetic features — **the very characteristics that have been described as highly predictive of recidivism among the correctional population.**[51] The National Coalition of State Juvenile Justice Advisory Groups notes three further distinctions of importance when considering the issues of military-style boot camps for correctional purposes:[52]

1. Military basic training itself has been modified to reduce some of its negative and aggressive characteristics and to reduce the potential for abuse of recruits.

2. A military boot camp experience is followed by a period of service in a highly structured military organization while correctional boot camps are followed by release into the community.

3. Many of the correctional boot camps have not included a comprehensive aftercare or intensive parole component to facilitate return to and reintegration into the community.

In summary, boot camp experience as currently designed, despite its popularity, has not proven successful in returning youth to a productive path. New York State Assemblyman Daniel Feldman notes:[53]

> *No one should delude themselves that this boot camp, military drill instruction alone is going to straighten everybody out. . . . I thought it would. A lot of us thought it would. But it doesn't.*

Waiver to adult system

Holding children accountable for their behavior by waiving them to the adult system for disposition is another option popular among the general public and law-and-order enthusiasts. This practice, however, raises two critical questions: At what age or under what circumstances does a child's behavior warrant the full sanctions and penalties of the adult system? And, perhaps more important, does this approach work — that is, is it effective?

With an increasing number of very young, seriously troubled and violent young people, opinions readily diverge on these issues. Generally, the standard for waiver to the adult system is to be applied when it is believed that resources at the community level for juveniles have been exhausted. The Juvenile Code and Youth Gang Study Commission summarizes the waiver issue as follows:[54]

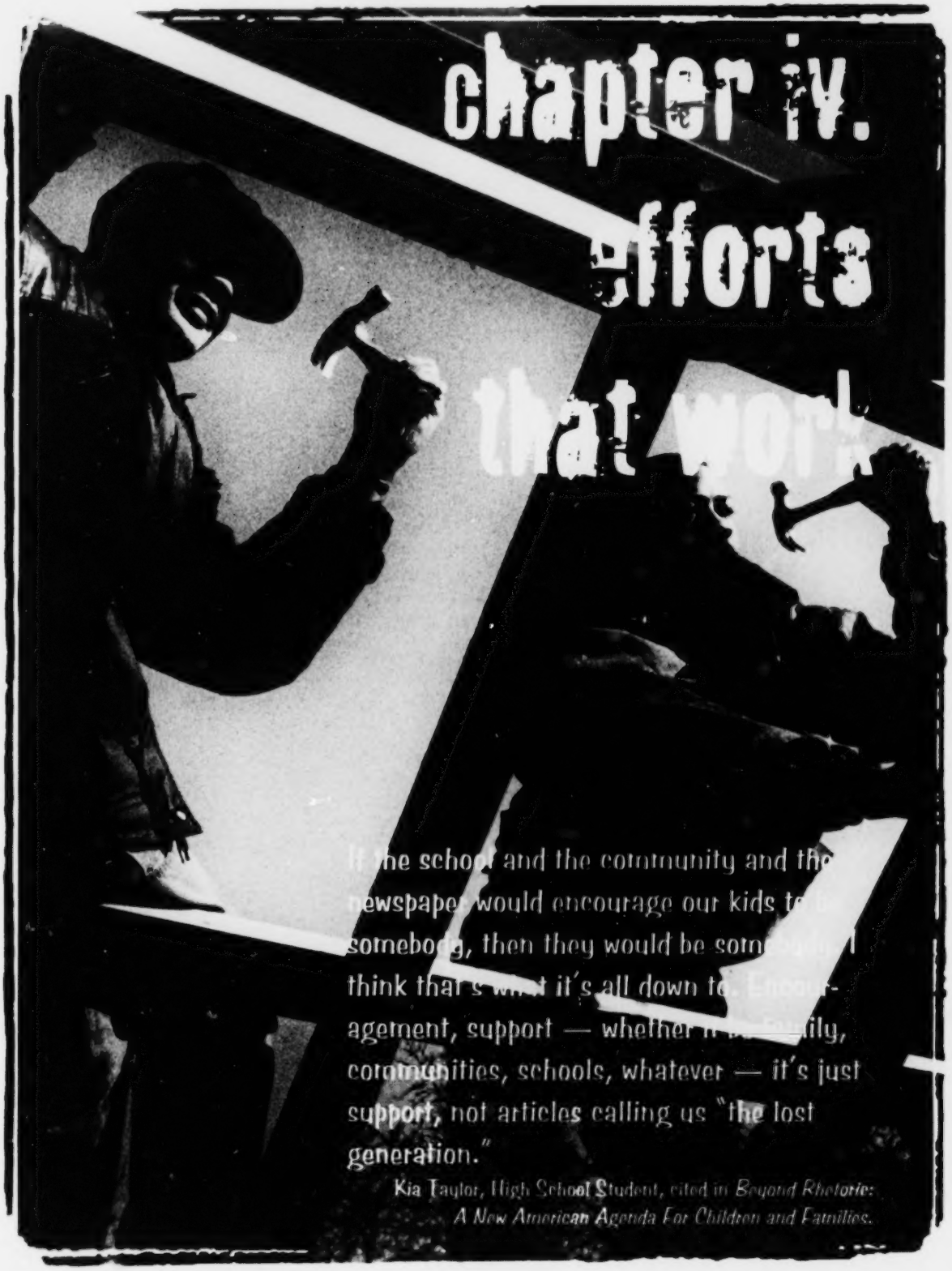
> *The waiver statute allows a prosecutor to petition the juvenile court for a hearing to determine if a child, who allegedly has committed either a heinous or aggravated act or has engaged in chronic, though less serious behavior, should be waived into the adult system. Waiver may occur if the child is at least fourteen years old, is deemed beyond rehabilitation of the juvenile justice system, and public safety requires lengthier and more punitive sanctions than may be available within the system. In the case of sixteen- and seventeen-year-old youths who are charged with the commission of acts that would be Class A or B felonies, the presumption favors waiver, unless it can be shown that both the child and community would be better served by keeping the case in the juvenile justice system.*

It is also important to remember that in Indiana, waiver to adult court is a moot issue for many young offenders. Indiana law states that the adult criminal court is *the* court of jurisdiction for young offenders ages 16 years and older who commit a variety of serious felonies including murder, kidnapping, rape, robbery while armed with a deadly weapon or resulting in bodily injury, carjacking, criminal gang activity, and carrying handguns, among others. These offenses will automatically be tried there.

Returning to the question of effectiveness, once again the National Coalition of State Juvenile Justice Advisory Groups' 1992 annual report notes:[55]

> *Three different studies over a ten-year period show significantly higher recidivism rates for youths tried in adult courts versus those tried in juvenile courts for the same offenses and with similar personal profiles (Snyder & Hutzler, 1981; White, 1985; Fagan, 1991).*

If waiving youth to the adult system results in greater victimization, higher recidivism rates, and less effectiveness overall, why do we continue to pursue this strategy?



If the school and the community and the newspaper would encourage our kids to be somebody, then they would be somebody. I think that's what it's all down to. Encouragement, support — whether it's family, communities, schools, whatever — it's just support, not articles calling us "the lost generation."

Kia Taylor, High School Student, cited in *Beyond Rhetoric: A New American Agenda For Children and Families.*

Programs that do work

Many programs work to prevent juvenile delinquency and crime. Some have been formally evaluated while others present only personal stories of dramatically changed lives. For people who work in the system, seeing the changes in these young lives is proof enough. A more rigorous examination of programmatic success would have to focus on an agreed-upon set of indicators of pro-social behavior and appropriate youth developmental progress. Agreeing upon these indicators is difficult as each program is necessarily based on its own individual mission and specifically tailored for the age and nature of the youth it serves.

For the purposes of this discussion, indicators of programs that work include any intervention or prevention effort that alters the attitudes and behaviors of the offender cohort. Examples include: reduced recidivism rates, higher rates of pro-social behavior (such as staying in school and improved grades), improved responsibility (such as not being rearrested or being rearrested for a lesser offense), finding and sustaining employment, paying child support, reduced household violence, and active participation in rehabilitation programs.

Ira Schwartz, Dean, School of Social Work, University of Pennsylvania expands on the variety of these types of programs.[56]

> *Alternative sentencing programs work. There are services that provide intensive supervision in the home. There are day treatment services and community-based programs. The key is to identify the appropriate level of surveillance and supervision that a person needs, what their educational, behavioral, and social needs are, and then to meet them.*

However, for these types of programs to succeed, a community infrastructure of support is needed. The Search Institute notes:[57]

> *A healthy community not only benefits youth who already have many assets in their favor, but is particularly powerful in protecting vulnerable youth who have fewer personal assets (such as strong families) in their lives. . . . Schools, churches, and synagogues, youth organizations, and the general support of structured activities are clearly influential in shaping a healthy community for youth.*

In examining programs that work to prevent youth crime and delinquency, it is noted that a wide variety of programs are available. This variety of programs exists because the nature of the offenses committed by and the needs of the specific youth served by each program varies greatly. It is not reasonable to compare effectiveness of unlike programs serving highly dissimilar youth. It may therefore be more helpful to focus on attributes that characterize successful programs serving all types of delinquent or offending youth rather than to examine individual programs.

Attributes of positive programs

Greenwood and Zimring (1985) and Altschuler and Armstrong (1984) have identified what they feel are critical elements of successful juvenile corrections programs. These critical elements include:[58]

- continuous case management
- careful emphasis on reintegration and reentry services
- opportunities for youth achievement and program decision making
- clear and consistent consequences for misconduct
- a diversity of forms of family and individual counseling matched to individual adolescent needs.

Richard Mendel provides the following commentary about what works with youth delinquency, crime and violence:

> *. . . The consensus today is delinquency prevention programs "can work." In fact, these programs often do work—but only when they are intensive, oriented to youth development, multi-dimensional, carefully designed, effectively implemented, and constantly evaluated with an eye to improving program performance.*[59] *. . . For the most part, young people do not avoid crime from fear of punishment. They avoid crime out of respect for themselves, concern for others, a belief in their future prospects and an internal sense of personal and public morality. Developing this internalized morality, fostering in young people the skills and the will to avoid crime, is the business of the whole community and the key to youth-oriented crime prevention.*[60] *. . . For troubled youth, just as for the general youth population and those more or less at risk, the basic ingredients of effective delinquency prevention are the same: fair and consistent discipline, opportunity for growth and development, and sustained access to caring adults.*[61]

Once again the literature asserts that what works to prevent youth delinquency and crime is support, nurturance, and caring communities that promote the healthy development of their youth. These measures result in youth who have respect for themselves and hope for the future and therefore avoid delinquent behavior.

What works for serious offenders

Before exploring what is most effective in meeting the needs of serious offenders, it may be helpful to examine just what these serious offenders look like. According to the National Coalition of State Juvenile Justice Advisory Groups:[62]

The criteria that are most often mentioned as characteristic of serious or chronic offenders include the following:

1) a delinquency adjudication prior to the age of thirteen,

2) low family income,

3) being rated troublesome between the ages of eight and ten by teachers and peers,

4) poor school performance by age ten,

5) psychomotor clumsiness,

6) poor nonverbal IQ, and

7) having a sibling convicted of a crime.

Violent offenders also show an exceptionally high incidence of head injuries and a history of serious physical or sexual abuse.[63]

Addressing the needs of the violent juvenile offender is a particular challenge, but one could begin by examining the factors outlined above and then work toward preventing their occurrence in general. Once a youth has become a violent offender, the behavior is much more difficult to change. It is also difficult to garner public support for the treatment needs of the serious offender. Violent offenses committed by youthful offenders appear to fuel the greatest public outrage and fear because of the incongruence between their ages, the seriousness of their crimes, and (in some situations) their apparent lack of remorse or feeling. Despite this fear and frustration, there are programs that can be effective even for those juvenile offenders who commit violent crimes.

The National Council on Crime and Delinquency summarized elements of programs that work well with violent offenders as follows:[64]

- Small, very intensive violent- and serious-offender programs, coupled with integrated community-based systems can effectively deal with most youthful violent offenders.

- The closest approximation to a model youth-corrections system that deals effectively with serious, violent, and chronic juvenile offenders can be found in the states of Massachusetts, Utah and Missouri. Each of these states has abandoned large training schools and developed small, secure facilities for the dangerous few.

Two specific programs that have proven effective with serious offenders are the "Florida Environmental Institute" and "Vision Quest."

The Florida Environmental Institute's Last Chance Ranch. The Florida Environmental Institute operates an intensive 18-month rehabilitation program for serious delinquents (an average of 18 prior offenses including 11.5 felonies) called "The Last Chance Ranch."[65] This program is based in the Florida Everglades and includes four phases:

1) a 3- to 5-day outdoor orientation experience,

2) an initial phase of work projects and education while youth sleep in a non-air conditioned, military-style dormitory,

3) a second phase where they move to an air-conditioned, military-style dormitory with television where they begin to earn money toward restitution or savings,

4) a final phase of intensive after-care in the youth's home community.

Evaluation data show that participants in this program have far lower recidivism rates (45 percent) than those youth who had been assigned to training schools (60 percent), even though 80 percent of the training school youth had criminal records that were less serious than the Last Chance Ranch participants.[66]

Vision Quest. The Vision Quest program offers a year-long series of outdoor adventures as an alternative to regular incarceration. The program has been seen as controversial because of alleged rough handling of the participants by program staff and injuries sustained by youth during storms and other nature-related emergencies. Despite this controversy, an independent evaluation conducted by the RAND Corporation revealed that Vision Quest participants had a lower recidivism rate (55 percent) than youth serving time in a county work camp (71 percent), than youth sentenced to California Youth Authority training schools (88 percent), and than those youth released into community treatment programs (68 percent).[67]

Successful programs for violent juvenile offenders are clearly important. It is also important to note that violent offenders represent only a very small proportion of the total population of juvenile offenders — approximately 5.2 percent of the offenses for which Indiana juveniles were arrested in 1992.[68] While these types of intensive, highly structured programs are necessary for violent offenders, they are not necessary for the majority of youthful offenders who can be treated successfully in community-based alternatives, such as intensive probation, day treatment units, home detention, and/or group homes.

Using a public health model to combat violence and delinquency

Many have suggested that a public health model is the most effective strategy to attack the violence and delinquency in our communities. Among those who support this type of approach are the Centers For Disease Control, The Children's Defense Fund, and the American Medical Association. Medical interest in a public health model to reduce violence is due to the fact that the Centers for Disease Control track data like morbidity and mortality rates, and physicians routinely care for the victims.

The public health model proposes three steps to reduce violence and delinquency in our communities.

1) Identify those risk factors associated with contracting a disease or causing the behavior being examined.

2) Then examine those factors that may serve as protective or insulating factors for the patient/potential offender.

3) Once risk factors are identified, reduce exposure through public education, or develop a means of countering the risk factors if exposed. If the risk factors cannot be avoided completely, the public education campaign should promote behaviors and attitudes that reduce their risk. An effective public education campaign should also promote those protective or insulating factors that ameliorate or prevent the behavior despite exposure to the risk factors.

According to the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment, "... a positive temperament, including positive mood and a tendency to evoke positive responses in others, a high IQ, positive school and work experiences, high self-esteem, some degree of structure in the environment, and one good relationship with a parent or other adult reduce the risk factors associated with offending."[69] David Hawkins and Richard Catalano of the University of Washington have found that strong bonding has served as an insulating factor in children's ability to resist crime and drug use. They believe that these bonds have three important components:[70]

1) Attachment — positive relations with others.

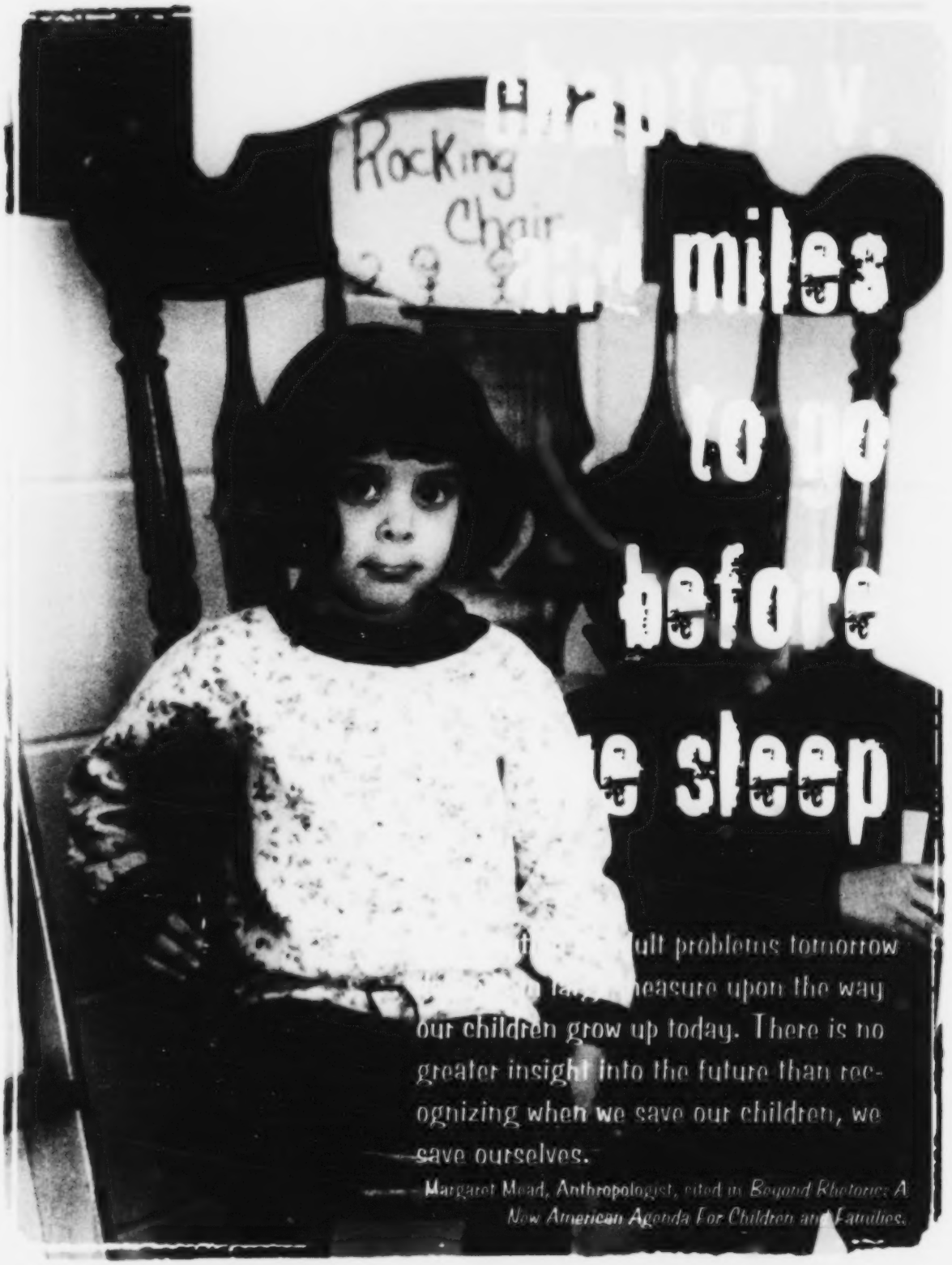
2) Commitment — an investment in the future.

3) Belief — about what is right and wrong, with an orientation to positive moral behavior and action.

The findings of both studies incorporate elements that are key ingredients and byproducts of programs that support the healthy development of youth. Pursuing a public health model to reduce violence and delinquency among youth would require an investment of resources to identify the risk and curative factors and conduct the public education campaign. To date, this investment in violence reduction through the public health model has been meager when compared with the approach to other diseases.

> *Violence in America is an epidemic. But unlike other public health emergencies, there has been no national commitment to research its causes and cures. In 1993, the National Research Council estimated that federal funding for research on violence totaled only $20 million per year — just $31 for each year of life lost due to violence. That compares to $794 spent on cancer research for each year of life lost, $441 for research on cardiovascular diseases, and $697 for research on AIDS.*[71]

If we are to successfully prevent and reduce the incidence of juvenile delinquency and violence, we must be willing to make an investment equivalent to that made for other public health emergencies.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save ourselves.
Margaret Mead, Anthropologist, cited in Beyond Rhetoric: A
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The courage to change

In *Kids, Crime, and Court: The Juvenile Justice System in Indiana*, we noted that youth about to be released from the juvenile justice system are often ambivalent. For many children, the safety, security and stability of the correctional system is a vast improvement over the conditions they face at home. Indiana's juvenile justice system places responsibility for offending behavior and for changing this behavior directly on the child, where indeed, it ultimately belongs. If young offenders are to succeed, however, far more attention must be paid to the family, school and community contexts to which they will be returning to live out their "reform."

In *Juvenile Justice in Indiana: Facing the Issues*, we noted that Indiana had major reform initiatives under way and that reports from the many different bipartisan studies, commissions, and working groups all reached essentially the same conclusions:

- Families must be important players in any services or reforms planned.
- We need a complete continuum of care for children and youth.
- Prevention programming is critical across the board.
- All components of the system must have sufficient staffing.
- Services among the system's agencies need to be coordinated.
- Planning for the needs of individual children must be flexible.
- Without an infusion of resources throughout the system, none of the proposed reform efforts will succeed.

The IYI report further noted that at this time neither remediation nor prevention programs alone are sufficient. Rather, a combined approach is needed to intervene and support fragile families and youth AND to invest in those programs that promote the healthy development of youth. This dual approach will require significant investment in both the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

In this report, *Juvenile Justice in Indiana: Facing What Works and What Doesn't*, we have noted the need for a change in direction in the programs and policies that address the needs of our troubled youth. We have also documented that the traditional, punitive, institutional, get-tough approaches are not effective and do not pay off in terms of reduced recidivism rates and pro-social behavior. Yet as a society, we have pursued this approach for more than 100 years, and it still does not work. The words of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency ring true:[72]

> *As the bitter lessons learned in the field of adult corrections have taught us, the inevitable consequence of get-tough responses will only be increased crowding and increased crime at increased cost to the taxpayers.*

It is as if we are caught in a child's fairy tale. The juvenile justice system as currently structured does not work, and we must summon the courage to say "The Emperor Has No Clothes!" Can we as a community afford to act based on public and political fear and misunderstanding and fail to invest in programs and services that the data clearly show work better, even if we as a community are uncomfortable with their not being punitive enough for the public?

We concluded in *Facing the Issues*:

> *All children are the responsibility of the whole community. . . . Can the citizens of the state of Indiana summon the public will to make the necessary investment in our children? The real question should be: Can we afford NOT to invest in our children? Our futures depend on it.*

It appears we now have an unprecedented, historical opportunity to make this paradigm shift to promote the healthy development of our youth. Indiana, like all of America, now stands at a crossroad. We are currently witnessing a revolution in state/federal government relations, referred to as the "new federalism" or "de-evolution." Federal programs are being altered and combined radically, with governance assigned to the states in the form of block grants. These block grants will likely have tremendous flexibility but decreased dollar totals. Decisions made when the block grants arrive will have significant repercussions for thousands of Hoosiers in the years to come. We are engaged in a huge social experiment, one that has the capacity for enormous progress or horrific regression, depending upon how programs are implemented.

Will we have the courage to invest in what works? Will we have the public will to support young people in their development from birth to adulthood? Will we have the determination to address the great disconnect between punishment and rehabilitation?

It is time that the needs of ALL children and youth be placed first on the public agenda. It is time that we promote the healthy development of our youth to prevent youth delinquency, crime and violence. It is time for action!

"With kindness conquer rage, with goodness conquer malice." Conquer With Love.[73]

notes

Notes

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10 Blueprints for Healthy Development

The Indiana Youth Institute's blueprints for healthy development of all Indiana's children are based on the premise that every child in Indiana deserves an equal opportunity to grow up in a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment.

Building a Healthy Body

Indiana's youth will be born at full term and normal birth weight to healthy mothers. They will receive a well-balanced diet in adequate supply to grow strong bodies to acceptable height for their age. They will be provided a balance of physical activity and rest in a safe and caring environment. They and their families will have access to good medical care and educational opportunities that will teach them how to abstain from health-endangering activities and engage in health-enhancing activities.

Building Positive Relationships

Indiana's children will experience love and care of parents and other significant adults. They will develop wholesome relationships while learning to work collaboratively with peers and adults.

Building Self-Acceptance

Indiana's children and youth will perceive themselves as lovable and capable; they will act with self-confidence, self-reliance, self-direction, and self-control. They will take pride in their accomplishments. As they develop self-esteem, they will have positive feelings about their own uniqueness as well as that of others.

Building Active Minds

Indiana's young people will have stimulating and nurturing environments that build on their individual experiences and expand their knowledge. Each young person will reach his or her own potential, gaining literacy and numeric skills that empower the lifelong process of asking questions, collecting and analyzing information, and formulating valid conclusions.

Building Spirit and Character

Indiana's young people will grow up learning to articulate values upon which to make ethical decisions and promote the common good. Within safe boundaries, children and youth will test limits and understand relationships between actions and consequences.

Building Creativity and Joy

Indiana's young people will have diverse opportunities to develop their talents in creative expression (e.g., music, dance, literature, visual arts, theater); to appreciate the creative talents of others; and to participate in recreational activities that inspire constructive, lifelong satisfaction.

Building a Caring Community

Indiana's communities will encourage their young people to see themselves as valued participants in community life. In addition to being recipients of services that express the communities' concerns for their safety and well-being, young citizens will become resources who will improve their surroundings, support the well-being of others, and participate in decisions that affect community life.

Building a Global Perspective

Indiana's children and youth will learn to see themselves as part of the global community, beyond ethnic, religious, racial, state, and national boundaries. In formal and nonformal educational experiences, they will have opportunities to become familiar with the history, political issues, languages, cultures, and ecosystems that affect global life and future well-being.

Building Economic Independence

Indiana's young people will be exposed to a variety of educational and employment experiences that will contribute to vocational and career options. Their formal and nonformal educational experiences will prepare them to make the transition from school to work, to contribute to the labor force, and to participate in an economic environment that will grow increasingly more complex and will require lifelong learning.

Building a Humane Environment

All children will have access to a physically safe environment, free from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and other forms of violence. They will have adequate housing and living conditions; safe neighborhoods; clean air, food, and water. Their environment will be free from toxins, drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. All children will have an opportunity to learn how to protect their environment for the future.

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who care about youth

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